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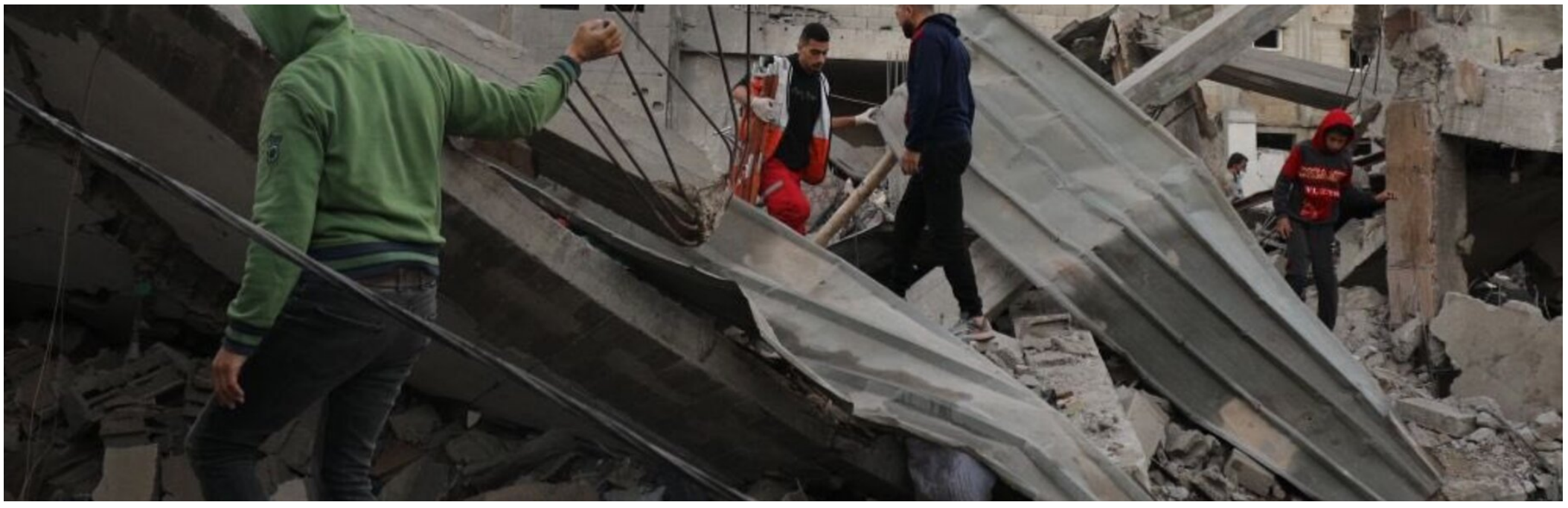

Destruction in the Gaza Strip. Photo by the Palestine Red Crescent Society, 1 December 2023

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Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #56

01 Dec 2023

Key points

- On 1 December, at about 7:00, hostilities resumed following a humanitarian pause that started on 24 November. Heavy Israeli bombardments across Gaza, as well as ground fighting and indiscriminate rocket fire from Palestinian armed groups to Israel have been reported. As of 20:00, at least 178 Palestinians have been killed and 589 injured, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza (MoH); no Israeli fatalities have been reported in this context.

- OCHA Under-Secretary-General Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths stated that the pause had "offered us a glimpse of what can happen when the guns fall silent...We need to maintain – and build on – the progress in aid delivery. We need civilians and the life-sustaining infrastructure they rely on to be protected. We need the remaining hostages to be released immediately and unconditionally. We need a humanitarian ceasefire. We need the fighting to stop."

- Since the resumption of hostilities on 1 December, and as of 18:00, no aid convoys or fuel deliveries have entered Gaza and aid convoys ready to enter Gaza have remained on the Egyptian side of the border. Humanitarian operations within Gaza have largely halted, except for services within shelters and limited distributions of flour in areas south of Wadi Gaza (hereafter: the south). The evacuation of wounded people and dual nationals to Egypt, and the return of Gazans stranded in Egypt, have also stopped.

- On 1 December, the Israeli military published online a detailed map, where the Gaza Strip is divided into hundreds of small areas. Reportedly, the map is intended to facilitate orders to evacuate specific areas ahead of their targeting.

The publication does not specify where people should evacuate to. It is unclear how those residing in Gaza would access the map without electricity and amid recurrent telecommunications cuts.

- On 1 December, Israeli forces dropped leaflets ordering residents of localities east of Khan Younis, in the south (Al Qarara, Khuza'a, Abasan and Bani Suheila) to move to the shelters in the Rafah area. As of 21:00, no major displacement from these areas has been reported.

- Under international humanitarian law, parties to a conflict must take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, civilian harm. This can entail evacuating civilians or giving effective advance warning of attacks, which provides civilians enough time to leave, as well as a safe route and place to go. All possible measures must be adopted to ensure that those civilians displaced can afford satisfactory conditions of safety, shelter, nutrition, and hygiene and ensure that family members are not separated.

- In the West Bank, since 7 October, over 3,000 Palestinians have been arrested, with more than 160 in the past six days. Many of them have been arrested without being presented direct evidence of an offense. According to the UN Human Rights Office, six Palestinian men have died in Israeli custody during this period, a decades-long high.

Hostilities and casualties (Gaza Strip)

- On 1 December, Israeli bombardments, as well as ground clashes with Palestinian armed groups, resumed in multiple areas across Gaza. As of 20:00, the Ministry of Health in Gaza (MoH) has reported 178 fatalities and 589 injuries.

- Fatal Israeli airstrikes reported since the resumption of hostilities and by 14:00, included the following: at 7:30, four people killed in Rafah refugee camp; at 7:40, seven people killed in Al Maghazi camp, Middle Area; at 9:20, ten people killed in Al Genina area, eastern Rafah; at 11:20, five people killed in Rafah refugee camp; at 12:45, seven people killed in eastern Rafah (fatality numbers included as reported and hours are approximate). All these incidents were to the south of Wadi Gaza.

- Between 7 October and 19 November, over 12,700 fatalities were reported by the Gaza MoH, which then stopped reporting directly due to the collapse of many hospitals. Since then, the Gaza Government Media Office reported over 15,000 Palestinians fatalities by 1 December, including 6,150 children and more than 4,000 women.

- The fatality toll since 7 October and until the resumption of hostilities includes at least 198 Palestinian medics, according to the Gaza MoH; 112 UN staff; 73 journalists and media workers, according to the Palestinian Journalist Syndicate; and at least 15 Civil Defense staff, according to the Palestinian Civil Defense.

- Overall, 75 Israeli soldiers have been killed in Gaza since the start of the Israeli ground operations, according to official Israeli sources.

Displacement (Gaza Strip)

- On 1 December, Israeli Forces renewed its warning and pressure on residents of the north to evacuate southwards. In southern Gaza, Israeli Forces dropped leaflets ordering demanding residents of villages east of Khan Younis, including Al-Qarara, Khuza'a, Abasan and Bani Suheila, to leave to shelters in Rafah area. No significant movement of people was reported from either of these areas.

- In previous weeks, the Israeli military has been calling and exerting pressure on residents of the north to leave southwards through a "corridor" along the main traffic artery, Salah Ad Deen Road.

- Up to 1.8 million people in Gaza, or nearly 80 per cent of the population, are estimated to be internally displaced. However, obtaining an accurate count is challenging; including because of difficulties in tracking IDPs staying with

host families and accounting for those who returned to their homes during the pause but remain registered in UNRWA and other shelters.

- Nearly 1.1 million IDPs are registered in 156 UNRWA facilities across Gaza, of whom about 86 per cent (958,000) are registered in 99 UNRWA shelters in the south. Another 191,000 IDPs are estimated to be staying in 124 public schools and hospitals, as well as in other venues such as wedding halls, offices, and community centres. The rest are hosted by families.

- Due to the overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions at UNRWA shelters in the south, there have been significant increases in some communicable diseases and conditions such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, skin infections and hygiene-related conditions like lice. There are also initial reports of disease outbreaks, including hepatitis.

- Concerns have been raised about vulnerable groups of people who are struggling with difficult shelter conditions. This includes people with disabilities; women who are pregnant, have recently given birth, or are breastfeeding; people who are recovering from injuries or surgeries; and those with compromised immune systems.

Humanitarian Access (Gaza Strip)

- Since the resumption of hostilities on 1 December, and as of 18:00, no aid convoys or fuel deliveries have entered Gaza and aid convoys ready to enter Gaza have remained on the Egyptian side of the border. Humanitarian operations within Gaza have largely halted, except for services within shelters and limited distributions of flour in areas south of Wadi Gaza (hereafter: the south). The evacuation of wounded people and dual nationals to Egypt, and the return of Gazans stranded in Egypt, have also stopped.

- On 30 November, nine injured people were evacuated to Egypt with 15 medical accompaniers and six others; additionally, 91 Gazans are stranded in Egypt, along with 33 medical staff from the United Arab Emirates; two UN personnel entered Gaza.

Electricity

- Since 11 October, the Gaza Strip has been under an electricity blackout, after the Israeli authorities cut off the electricity supply, and fuel reserves for Gaza's sole power plant depleted. Depending on the availability of fuel, electricity is produced by generators, as well as by solar panels.

For more information on electricity supply to the Gaza strip, please see this dashboard.

Health care, including attacks (Gaza Strip)

- On 1 December, UNRWA reported a Hepatitis A outbreak in one of its shelters. Separately, the agency has provided 10,000 medical consultations a day in the shelters hosting IDPs. Furthermore, since 4 November, 12,000 children have received vaccinations in UNRWA shelters.

- Four hospitals in the north are partially operating and admitting patients, with only limited services. Two other hospitals are providing dialysis services for kidney patients only. None of the hospitals in the north has surgery capacity. On 29 November, during the humanitarian pause, UN agencies delivered lifesaving medicines and surgical supplies, along with fuel, to two hospitals in Gaza city, Al Ahli and As Sahaba.

Water and sanitation (Gaza Strip)

- Despite the pause, there was almost no improvement in the access of residents in the north to water for drinking and domestic purposes, as most of the main water production facilities remained shut, due to the lack of fuel and

some also due to damage. Water is primarily available from small private and UNRWA wells. Serious concerns about waterborne diseases due to water consumption from unsafe sources persist.

- In the south, UNRWA continues to operate eight water wells that provide potable and domestic water to IDP shelters, alongside water trucking operations. Over the past few weeks, solid waste collection from the camps, and emergency shelters and transfer to landfills also continues, to reduce the level of health and environmental risks.

Food security

- On 30 November, the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed food parcels, canned beans, and fortified biscuits in the south across UNRWA shelters and six distribution points outside shelters, for displaced families. Additionally, 15,000 families hosting IDPs received food parcels.

- Since 21 November, UNRWA has provided flour to 30,222 families outside of their shelters in addition to the daily food support that UNRWA provides for IDPs in their shelters.

- On 28 November, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) stated that Gaza suffers a US$1.6 million daily loss in farm production. The institution assesses the losses are likely higher considering the destruction of farm equipment and farmland, and damage caused to thousands of trees, especially olive trees. The economic impact is also significant, considering that 55 per cent of Gaza's agricultural products used to be sold outside the coastal enclave, PCBS stated.

- The amount of cooking gas that reportedly entered Gaza from Egypt during the pause (about 85 tons per day) is a third of the equivalent daily average that entered between January and August 2023.

Hostilities and casualties (Israel)

- On 1 December, indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza towards Israel resumed. In total, over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed in Israel, according to the Israeli authorities, the vast majority on 7 October.

- On 1 December, according to the Israeli media, six Israelis who were hostages or assumed to be hostages were declared killed. During the humanitarian pause, 86 Israelis and 24 foreign nationals had been released. It is estimated that about 137 people remain captive in Gaza, including Israelis and foreign nationals, according to Israeli official sources. Before the pause, four civilian hostages had been released by Hamas, one Israeli soldier had been rescued by Israeli forces, and three bodies of hostages had reportedly been retrieved by Israeli forces.

Violence and casualties (in and around the West Bank)

- The UN Human Rights Office reported a dramatic increase in the number of Palestinians detained by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since 7 October, over 3,000 Palestinians have been arrested, with more than 160 in the past six days, often without direct evidence of an offense. According to the Office, six Palestinian men have died in Israeli custody during this period, a decades-long high. The surge in arrests, reports of ill-treatment, and failure to adhere to due process raise serious concerns about Israel's compliance with international law.

- No Palestinian or Israeli fatalities were reported on 1 December in the West Bank.

- Since 7 October, 241 Palestinians, including 63 children, were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Additionally, two Palestinians from the West Bank were killed while carrying out an attack in Israel. Of those killed in the West Bank, 231 were killed by Israeli forces, eight by Israeli settlers and two either by forces or settlers. The

seven-week toll represents more than half of all Palestinians killed in the West Bank this year. Already, 2023 is the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since OCHA began recording casualties in 2005.

- Since 7 October, four Israelis, including three members of Israeli forces, have been killed in attacks by Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. An additional four were killed in West Jerusalem in a Palestinian attack (one of whom appears to be killed by Israeli forces).

- Two-thirds of the Palestinian fatalities in the West Bank since 7 October have occurred during search-and-arrest and other operations carried out by Israeli forces, including some – mainly in Jenin and Tulkarm governorates – involving exchange of fire with Palestinians. More than half of the fatalities were reported in operations that did not involve armed clashes.

- Since 7 October, Israeli forces have injured 3,229 Palestinians, including at least 509 children; 45 per cent of them in the context of demonstrations and 46 per cent in the context of search-and-arrest and other operations. An additional 80 Palestinians have been injured by settlers and 18 others either by Israeli forces or settlers. Some 33 per cent of those injuries have been caused with live ammunition, compared with nine per cent in the first nine months of 2023.

- In two incidents on 1 December, Israeli settlers entered As Sawiya and Jalud villages in Nablus, where they threw stones and damaged two houses, set fire to a Palestinian-owned vehicle and vandalized a Palestinian-owned shop. On 30 November, dozens of armed settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, entered Al Hathroura, east of Jericho city, and vandalized a vehicle and two solar panel systems, and threatened community members at gunpoint, saying they would be killed if they did not leave.

- Since 7 October, OCHA has recorded 302 settler attacks against Palestinians, resulting in Palestinian casualties (33 incidents), damage to Palestinian-owned property (229 incidents), or both casualties and damage to property (40 incidents). This reflects a daily average of five incidents, compared with three since the beginning of the year. One-third of these incidents included threats with firearms, including shootings. In nearly half of all incidents, Israeli forces were either accompanying or actively supporting the attackers.

Displacement (West Bank)

- Since 7 October, at least 143 Palestinian households comprising 1,014 people, including 388 children, have been displaced amid settler violence and access restrictions. The displaced households are from 15 herding/Bedouin communities.

- Additionally, 220 Palestinians, including 114 children, have been displaced since 7 October following demolitions in Area C and East Jerusalem, due to lack of permits; and 63 Palestinians, including 31 children, have been displaced following punitive demolitions.

Funding

- As of 29 November, Member States have disbursed USD$352.6 million against the updated Flash Appeal launched by the UN and its partners to implement its response plan in support of 2.2 million people in the Gaza Strip and 500,000 in the West Bank. This constitutes about 29 per cent of the $1.2 billion requested. Private donations are collected through the Humanitarian Fund.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSES: 20-26 November

Health

During the reporting period, Cluster partners have delivered the following items across Gaza:

- Various medical supplies to six hospitals and the ambulances;
- 300 Interagency Emergency Health Kits (IEHK);
- 15 Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) community kit and 50 midwifery kit and 15 obstetric surgical kit; 16 Inter-Agency Emergency Health Kits (IARH)
- 72 rehabilitation and nursing sessions, and 3,177 post-natal care consultations.
- 900 family hygiene kits distributed in one IDP shelter in An Nusseirat and 120 host community shelters;
- 1,070 dignity kits to women staying in IDP shelters.

During the same period, there have been an average of 30,000 primary healthcare consultations per day through fixed and mobile clinic services; 10,156 children were vaccinated after this service resumed in November. Mental health and psychosocial services are being provided by partners, mainly in shelters, to 20,000.

An Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Coordination Cell is now operational in Cairo and will soon be active in Gaza. The strategy involves providing a surge in supplies, infrastructure, and staffing to support existing health facilities. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) surge teams are already on the ground, offering healthcare services. The Jordanian field hospital is being set up, and 31 teams are ready to deploy with support from WHO.

Main factors that have been impeding operations include limited access to the north; shortage of fuel, medical supplies, water, food, and other essential supplies; displacement of partners, their staff and families; and overcrowding in IDP shelters. NGO partners have experienced difficulties with their logistics capacity in Egypt. So far, only 19 per cent of the funding required to respond has been committed.

Protection

Mine risk education remains a top priority right now in protection for people in Gaza. Despite challenges, during the reporting period, 21 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) focal points were deployed in 11 UNRWA shelters in the south benefiting 4,768 people. The UN Mine Action Service is planning to send 1 million people EORE messages. Planning for the expansion of risk education outreach in non-UNRWA shelters is underway. One of the biggest challenges is reaching everyone in Gaza, both physically reaching them particularly in the north, in non UNRWA locations as well as challenges with patchy communication and electricity shortages.

A registration tool for unaccompanied and separated children is ongoing. Temporary care arrangements are being confirmed as well as coordination with Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) and WHO on children who are evacuated for medical reasons. Child protection actors in Gaza are being identified and mapping of available services is ongoing. Access challenges, including fuel shortages, and limited children related supplies in Gaza such as suitable winter clothes, recreational kits and activities continue to affect the scale of immediate child protection responses. Important also is identifying/mapping available child protection actors and services

Providing crucial support for women and girls involves addressing the depletion of local hygiene supplies, particularly dignity and menstrual hygiene kits. Despite efforts to procure these supplies, the demand exceeds the available resources, necessitating increased supplies, improved access, and additional funding. Ensuring the safety of women in shelters is paramount, prompting the GBV sub-cluster to develop an observation tool. A team of volunteers will collect observations in nearby sites, contributing valuable information on gender-related issues and needs. Challenges include

reaching GBV partners, comprehensive mapping of services, and the significant impact on GBV services. Out of over 20 partners, only nine were reached, and six can assist with voluntary observational work. Re-establishing referral pathways for survivors, crucial in GBV response, requires rebuilding and coordination with UNRWA is deemed essential.

Beyond mine risk efforts, disability and inclusion initiatives concentrate on psychosocial support (PSS) recreational activities in UNRWA southern shelters. In the past week, 46 sessions were conducted across 46 shelters, benefitting 10,649 children and 316 adults (parents and caregivers participating in the activities with their children). Additionally, 108 assistive devices were distributed. More supplies, including assistive devices, hygiene kits, and wound dressing kits, are expected to arrive in Gaza in the coming days. Ongoing challenges and constraints hampering the much-needed scale-up of response efforts include insufficient fuel for movements and communication issues.

Despite extreme overcrowding at shelters, UNRWA has been able to provide some recreational activities, PSS support, and mine risk awareness sessions. They have also conducted child protection assessments and been assessing how to implement activities with children and young adults and scale up these activities across all their shelters.

Food security

Since November 24th, WFP has supported 121,161 people in shelters and host communities by distributing bread, food parcels, and e-vouchers. Additionally, one WFP bakery operates ad-hoc, reaching approximately 90,000 people in shelters with bread on Fridays.

On November 26, UNRWA extended its flour distribution to areas outside shelters in the southern governorates, reaching 20,720 families thus far.

During the current humanitarian pause, the prioritised flour distribution continued in the North and Gaza City as part of ongoing humanitarian convoys in the North of Wadi Gaza.

On November 26, at UNRWA shelters in Jabalia in the north, approximately 7.6 metric tons of high-energy biscuits provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), were distributed as ready-to-eat food. This allocation is sufficient to meet the minimal daily food intake for 23,616 people for one day.

Partners are encountering difficulties in operating, given the situation on the ground. Despite the 4-day truce, they reported difficulties in fuelling their vehicles to implement/monitor the food assistance.

- Anera, PARC, together with United Palestinian Appeal, Taawon, and Middle East Children Alliance, covered around 55,000 people with food parcels in host communities this week.
- ACF targeted host families by giving fresh vegetable parcels to 3,200 people to host families.
- OXFAM distributed 1000 Food parcels to IDPs in non-UN shelters in Rafah and Khan Younis and reached 1133 families in Rafah and Khan Younis with food vouchers.
- Beit Lahia Development Association distributed bread for host families, targeting around 6,000 beneficiaries.
- Other partners are mobilizing resources in the coming days, targeting the three governorates of the Middle Area, Khan Younis and Rafah.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

During the reporting period, including since the humanitarian pause, Shelter Cluster partners conducted field assessments at numerous collective centres and makeshift shelters in the south, revealing a shortage of basic bedding sets (mattresses and blankets) for the majority of IDPs. There is also an urgent need for firewood as an alternative fuel

source for preparing food due to a lack of other options.

Due to limited supplies, cluster partners coverage of Shelter and NFIs needs not more than 3 per cent of needs, and not more than 17 per cent if the items in the pipeline that have not arrived are considered.

Severe shortages in shelter winterization materials and essential NFIs persist, including sealing off kits for damaged houses and creating additional living spaces; there is a significant lack of bedding sets, including mattresses and blankets, to meet the needs of IDPs in various settings.

Education

Since 7 October, nine Education Cluster partners have reached 50,726 students and teachers. The main deliverables included emergency learning and recreational supplies (26,833 people reached), psychosocial support (31,318 reached), and recreational activities (49,726 reached). The response has been focusing on Khan Younis, Rafah, and Middle governorates, as North Gaza and Gaza governorates are inaccessible.

Multi-Purpose Cash assistance (MPCA)

Since the beginning of the hostilities, 66,870 households (including roughly 449,000 people) were delivered Emergency MPCA. Cash out rates across the response stand at 70-75 per cent but have been declining slightly over the past few days. While distribution is delivered across the Gaza strip, the vast majority is now concentrated in the south.

Formal market actors, such as supermarkets and retailers are largely depleted and facing major challenges in re-stocking and operating; however, informal markets, such as vendors, minimarts, carts and stalls, reportedly turned into the main source for goods. Information is still unclear on whether shops and markets actors were able to restock during the pause.

Post distribution monitoring data from recipients of cash assistance point to food, water, medicines, hygiene products, and clothing as the top expenditures reported. About 81 per cent of respondents reported that unrestricted cash helped them accessing needed goods and services, either fully or partially. Over 95 per cent reported unrestricted cash as their preference for future assistance.

Logistics

The Logistics Cluster developed and disseminated a new online reporting form to collect information regarding incoming supplies as well as the current stock levels in Egypt and other countries. The form was shared with 34 organisations that are part of the Logistics Cluster and other Clusters and is an ongoing project to be updated on a weekly basis.

On 22 November, 21 mobile storage units (MSUs) arrived in Al Arish, Egypt. The MSUs will be installed, in Egypt to augment the Egyptian Red Crescent's (ERC) warehousing capacity, and 11 will be delivered to Gaza to expand the storage capacity in key locations. An additional three MSUs were already delivered to Gaza and are in the process of being installed. The latter MSUs will provide an additional 960 m2 of storage capacity. To further support partners inside Gaza, an International NGO will support with providing access to their storage capacity through the Logistics Cluster to receive I/NGOs' cargo on behalf of the wider humanitarian community.

Emergency Telecommunications

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) coordination team continues to engage all parties — the Egyptian Red Crescent, OCHA, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the Egyptian authorities — to fast-track the importation process of telecommunications equipment through either Egypt or Israel into Gaza. Liaison with OCHA continues the importation of equipment into Gaza via Israel. To coordinate a collective approach among partners for the

importation of equipment, 11 partners have submitted their ICT equipment needs through a survey which is currently ongoing. The ETC urgently requires an initial US$250,000 out of the total requested US$800,000 in the Flash Appeal to continue its ongoing activities and address the immediate needs in Gaza.

Reliable communications networks are needed to enable humanitarians to stay connected in high-risk situations, restore security communications networks for UN staff, and coordinate response activities.

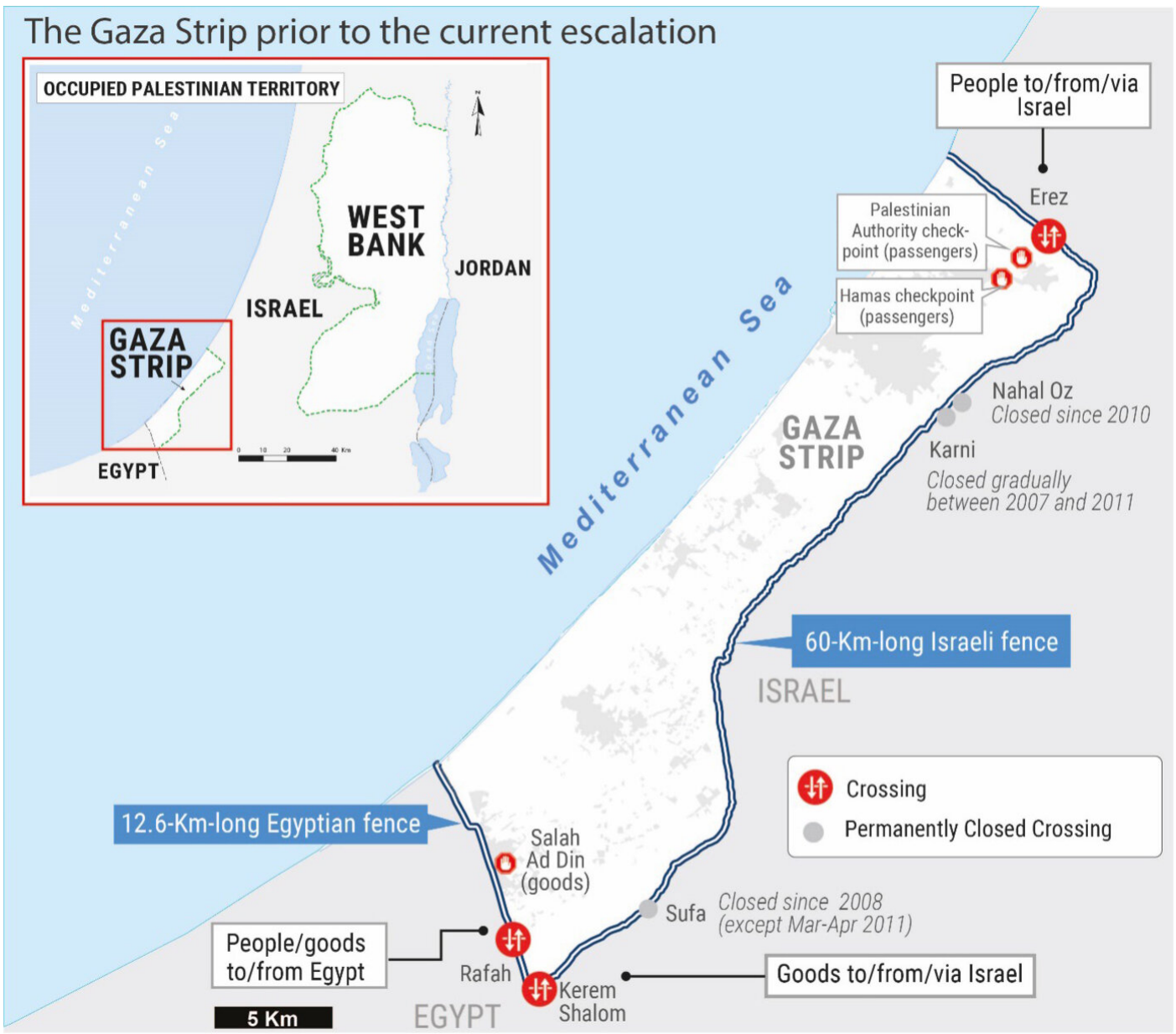
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The standards for emergency water supply include aspects for water quantity, water quality and access to water. The minimum daily water needs for the population of Gaza has been agreed at 15 liters/person/day (L/D/P), whereas the pre-crisis water use was approximately 100 L/P/D.

During the reporting period, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility and WASH agencies have produced on average over 50,327 cubic meters of water, which is the equivalent of approximately 22.6 L/P/D. Water quality and access standards, however, remain unachieved. Access is a particular challenge as the water networks are fractured, production points are reduced, power for pumping and distribution restricted and storage and outlets minimized. Many communities are isolated across Gaza but particularly north of Wadi Gaza.

WASH partners' activities included the trucking of 316 cubic meters of water, the distribution of 522 cubic meters of bottled water, and 10,280 family hygiene kites, all in the south. In addition, 260 Solid Waste Containers were distributed in 13 shelters in the north.

Protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) remains a cross-cutting priority for all clusters. The SAWA helpline, reachable at 121 and through WhatsApp at +972 59-4040121 (East Jerusalem at 1-800-500-121), operates 24/7. This toll-free number is widely disseminated across all areas of intervention to report cases of SEA and to facilitate emergency counselling and referrals for affected communities to access life-saving services. The PSEA Network monitors calls daily and will increase the number of counsellors if necessary.



* Asterisks indicate that a figure, sentence, or section has been rectified, added, or retracted after the initial publication of this update.